

**Joint Statement by:  
The Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees**

## **EEO Joint Statement February 2002 Briefing**

The NRC's Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP) contains guiding principles for establishing a framework for NRC's EEO program and diversity management process. Listed under each guiding principle is a set of goals and objectives needed to successfully reach the guiding principles in the NRC's AEP. The goals and objectives contained in the plan address the areas needed for a successful EEO program and diversity management process at the NRC. Because the AEP is the NRC's strategic framework for (1) identifying and pursuing EEO goals and (2) supports the NRC's managing diversity initiatives, the EEO advisory committees have decided to provide its comments on EEO and diversity at the NRC within the context of the NRC's AEP.

One guiding principle of the AEP is to employ a competent and highly skilled workforce, representative at all levels of America's diversity; and enable employees to accomplish the NRC's mission by providing support, tools, and a positive work environment. The NRC's EEO advisory committees encourage the NRC to continue with its visible and concerted emphasis on meeting the goals and objectives under this guiding principle, namely:

1. Enhance opportunities for advancement of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities in the professional positions, through
  - a. Targeted recruitment of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities in the applicant pool for professional positions
  - b. Encourage minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities to participate in rotational assignments.
  - c. Encourage minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities in formal development programs.
  - d. Ensure that fair and equal consideration for advancement is given to women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities.
2. Expand the pool of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities for supervisory, management, executive, and senior level positions.

The AEP does not explicitly include employees older than 50 in the two guiding principles listed above. However, the EEO advisory committees believes that the two guiding principles listed above should be equally applicable to employees older than 50.

During the current and last years recruitment season, the NRC has adopted practices to increase the chance of successfully recruiting highly qualified minorities for entry level positions and the Nuclear Safety Intern Program. The EEO advisory committees encourage the NRC to continue those practices which included: on-the-spot offers and establishing relationships with university professors. If the make-up of the current Leadership Potential Program is a reflection of NRC's commitment to diversity, the EEO advisory committees are confident that diversity will be given due consideration during the selection of qualified candidates to participate in the upcoming Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program.

A guiding principle of the AEP is to ensure that NRC policies, processes, and procedures provide all employees the opportunity to participate in mission accomplishments, and to compete fairly and equitably for career enhancement and advancement. The NRC's advisory committees encourage

the NRC to significantly increase its commitment to the goals and objectives under this principle, namely:

3. Establish management policies and practices that support the EEO initiatives of the NRC.
  - a. Conduct periodic reviews of the Merit Selection Process to ensure that current procedures and practices are consistent with goals and objectives.

Another guiding principle of the AEP is to recognize, appreciate, and value diversity, thereby demonstrating trust, respect, and concern for the welfare of all employees within the NRC. The NRC's advisory committees encourage the NRC to significantly increase its commitment to the goals and objectives under this principle, namely:

1. Encourage management to create and maintain a work environment that fosters open communication, mutual trust, and respect.
  - a) Encourage management to include employees in deliberations and decisions making processes, as appropriate, to create opportunities for employees' views to be heard and valued.
  - b) Provide honest and timely feedback on employees' performance and other concerns.
2. Demonstrate, through its actions, that management is concerned for employee welfare, morale, and recognition.
  - a) Continue family-friendly policies and practices such as work-at-home, part-time work schedules, and job sharing.

The NRC has already started addressing some of these goals. As part of the internal communication effort, the EDO and some of the Offices have encouraged honest, frank feedback on employee performance. The EDO and HR have held focus group meetings with minority employees to identify aspects of the Merit Selection Process that may need attention.

The NRC's goals and objectives for EEO and diversity should be treated as a key message. Many of us that serve on the individual EEO advisory committees are well-aware of the efforts of the EDO, HR, SBCR, and some of the Offices/Regions to enhance diversity at the NRC and strengthen its commitment to EEO. However, it appears that many of the ongoing initiatives have not been effectively communicated to NRC employees and supervisors. Even though it is not included as a goal or objective in the NRC's Affirmative Employment Plan, NRC managers should more frequently communicate their commitment and expectations for the EEO program and diversity management process at the EDO, Office/Region, Division, Branch, and Section levels of management as part of the communication infrastructure recommended in the Communication is Key report dated May 2001.

On the whole, the EEO advisory committees are satisfied with the recent efforts the NRC has made with regard to the EEO program and diversity management, but would like to see more visible progress. Each of the EEO advisory committees looks forward to working with SBCR, HR, and NRC management to ensure visible progress is made toward fully implementing the goals and objectives identified in the NRC's Affirmative Employment Plan.

**Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee  
February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

The Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee (HEPAC) appreciates this opportunity to address the Commission on EEO-related issues that impact the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Since HEPAC's creation, nine years ago, we have always stressed that NRC management needs to address four main issues:

1. Recruitment and hiring of Hispanics;
2. Retention of Hispanics;
3. Support promotions and career development for Hispanics; and
4. Provide high visibility rotations for Hispanics to, for example, Commission and EDO offices.

This past year has been good for the Hispanics at NRC. The Agency has excelled in recruiting and hiring entry-level Hispanics. The new hires hold much promise for the future and currently provide each of their offices with an enhanced level of diversity. HEPAC recognizes the recent efforts are a good start to addressing the under-representation of Hispanics in the agency relative to their representation in the civilian labor force. However, HEPAC believes that to achieve diversity at NRC that is reflective of society's diversity will require a sustained Agency effort to recruit and hire Hispanics.

Retention has not been a problem because NRC has also addressed the other issues. The Agency's efforts to support promotion and career development of Hispanics have been visible. NRC promoted three Hispanics to GG-15, one Hispanic to a supervisor, and selected three Hispanics for the Leadership Potential Program. HEPAC encourages the Agency to ensure that selection of qualified candidates to the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program reflects the diversity recently achieved in the Leadership Potential Program. On rotational assignments, three Hispanics had rotations to the Commission Offices (Chairman's and Commissioner Dicus' office) within the same year. These rotational opportunities are significant because they provide visibility for employees that may have otherwise not been afforded certain opportunities. For instance, one Hispanic was promoted to a GG-15 and was selected for the Leadership Potential Program after rotating through a Commissioner's office.

All four issues of concern to HEPAC are equally important to the success of Hispanics at NRC. HEPAC would like to commend the Agency for all the efforts recruiting and hiring entry-level Hispanics. HEPAC would caution, however, that addressing only one issue at the expense of the others will diminish any positive impact and may even hamper any progress in other areas. For example if management solely focuses on increasing the entry-level hires to address the EEO-issues for Hispanics, retention is likely to suffer, which will undoubtedly decrease the success of the recruitment efforts. HEPAC encourages the Agency to strive for the same success in retention, promotion, career development, and creation of rotational opportunities, as has been achieved in recruiting and hiring of entry-level employees.

HEPAC appreciates management support this past year and praises their efforts.

**The Asian/Pacific American Advisory Committee (APAAC)**  
**February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

In the last EEO Briefing, we expressed a concern that the number of Asian/Pacific Americans (APAs) in management positions, including SES ranks, remained historically low compared with the available pool of highly qualified APAs. Specifically, the APA group was the most adversely impacted group during a series of Office reorganizations in the past. The under-representation of APAs in management and SES positions is evident from the Workforce Profile Data included in this briefing package. We would like to reemphasize our concern and continue urging greater management focus on the issue of advancement of APA employees to management positions.

Again, we recommend management focus in the following areas:

- a) Improve APA representation in management assignments, including SES.
- b) Encourage active participation in formal and informal sponsorships between SES managers and APA employees to enhance developing APA employees' career advancement potentials.
- c) Broaden APA employees' experience and participation in leadership and management assignments, including various career developmental programs.
- d) Participate actively by all Program Offices and Regions in targeted recruitment and in career development of APA employees.

We recognize the selection of five APAs in the NRC Leadership Potential Program and 2002 Executive Leadership Program as a positive step in developing feeder groups for management positions. However, the continuing under-representation of APAs in senior level management positions critically undermines the Agency's diversity goals. We emphatically urge that Agency management effectively address these recommendations.

**Committee on Age Discrimination (CAD)**  
**February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

The Committee on Age Discrimination (CAD) appreciates the opportunity to address the Commission on aging issues. CAD continues to enjoy the active participation of its members, and successful communications with the other EEO committees and the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR). We actively campaigned for new members and we were successful in adding an additional three members.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) applies to employees over the age of 40. In recognition of the NRC's aging population, CAD studies aging issues for several age groupings over the age of 40. The full and productive use of the NRC's older employees is in the best interest of NRC staff, managers, and the goals of the agency. CAD hopes to continue to work with SBCR, NRC management, and the Commission, to make the NRC an example of progressive thinking and innovative actions regarding aging workforce issues in government, and society as a whole.

We have met with the NRR and NMSS liaisons to discuss issues of concerns to the committee and we intend to use the NRR and NMSS liaisons as a means to achieve the long term CAD goals of an age discrimination-free organization and the transfer of the knowledge and experience of the older NRC workforce to the younger workforce.

We would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention one area of continuing interest to CAD:

Continuing CAD concerns are fair performance appraisals, rotational assignments, and promotions for staff age 50 and above. Past briefings have identified low ratings in appraisals, few rotational assignments, and few promotions for older scientists and engineers. These same issues still exist. CAD highly recommends that management continue to be sensitized to ensure fair evaluations of staff age 50 and above. To address these issues, CAD recommended to SBCR that a seminar be held to reinforce, expand, and refine employees' and managers' knowledge and skills related to effectively participating in NRC's performance appraisal process. SBCR is working with HR to explore ways to implement CAD's proposal.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission on aging issues and look forward to our continued interaction with other EEO committees and the SBCR.

**Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee**  
**February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

FWPAC's goal for FY 2002 is to enhance opportunity for women to advance at NRC through (1) the development of additional upward mobility positions, and (2) increased rotational opportunities.

FWPAC would like to highlight some recent progress toward these goals in the development of a new upward mobility position in Region IV. FWPAC further recommends the Commission establish the goal of one new upward mobility position in each of the other three regions and 3-4 new upward mobility positions in Headquarters.

FWPAC is continuing to track progress on last year's goals that have not been included into this year's objectives:

- ! Career planning training that targets clerical and administrative support staff similar to the Career Planning Sessions sponsored by FWPAC, HR, and SBCR.
- ! Review and update secretarial positions descriptions consistent with the actual work performed. Reclassify, as necessary, jobs to reflect accurate position titles, series, and grades.
- ! "Family-friendly" work arrangements such as Flexiplace.

The issue of flexiplace has been addressed with the new telecommuting policy negotiated between NRC and the union (Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 54). This article provides for both fixed schedule and project-based telecommuting. This agreement will benefit all employees, not only women.

## **Advisory Committee for African Americans February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

The Advisory Committee for African Americans (ACAA) welcomes the opportunity to address the Commission on equal employment opportunity (EEO) related issues that impact African American employees and the Agency. During the past year, the NRC has taken a number of positive steps to strengthen the NRC's EEO program and diversity management process.

In FY 2001, a group of African American employees from the various Offices and Regions met with the Deputy Executive Director for Management Services (DEDMS) to discuss workplace issues that impact career development and advancement of African Americans. As a result, an action plan was developed to address concerns raised during those meetings. These include recruitment, retention, sponsorship, and feedback. Also, staff from the Office of Human Resources coordinated facilitated focus groups of African American employees to discuss the merit selection process.

To address targeted recruitment concerns, the NRC implemented recruitment strategies for Historically Black Colleges and Universities similar to those used so successfully at the University of Puerto Rico.

As outlined in the Joint EEO Statement, ACAA's focus continues to be:

- ! Increase the number of African Americans in supervisory, management, senior executive service, and senior level positions.
- ! Increase the number of African Americans in the feeder groups (Grades GG 13-15) for supervisory, management, senior executive service, and senior level positions.
- ! Increase the number of entry-level and experienced African American new hires.

ACAA will continue working with the Deputy Executive Director for Management Services, Office of Human Resources, Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, and program offices to strengthen the NRC's EEO program and diversity management process.